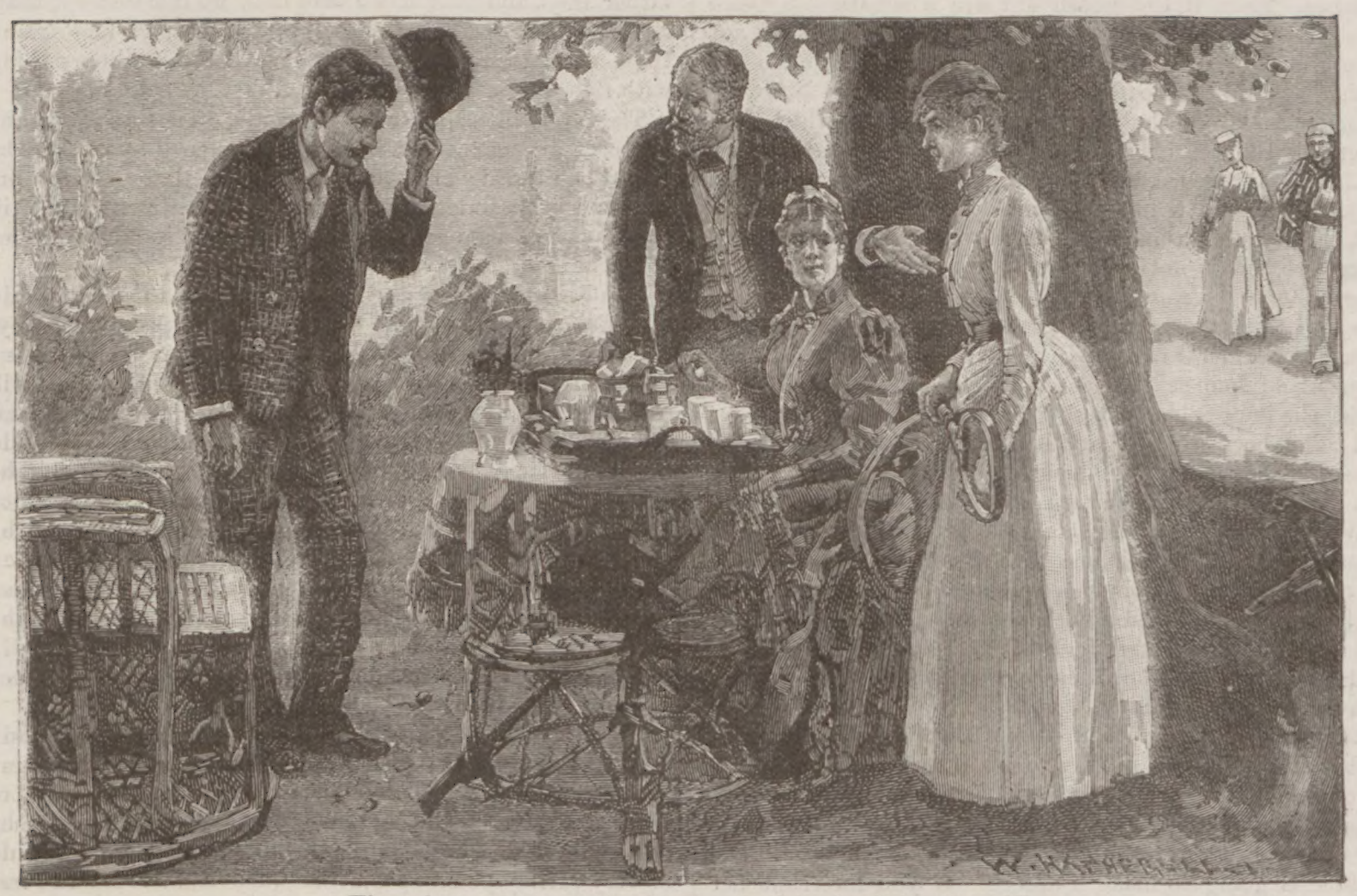
A DOMESTIC DIFFICULTY.

BY EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN,

Author of "Barbara's Brothers," "Roger's Revenge," "Little Lady Clare," etc.



"The players came slowly forward to be introduced." p. 100.

CHAPTER I.

CLAN C.

"O MOTHER, dear, do say no; it will be so horrid!" pleaded Clara.

"What I call a horrid swindle," cried Charlie, though his merry face was twinkling all over with fun as his mother shook her head at hearing such an expression pass his lips.

"If it had been any other summer but this it would not have mattered so much," added Conny, speaking more gently, but even more persuasively than the other two. "But, mother dear, cannot you understand that we really *do* want to keep to ourselves just the very last summer we may ever perhaps spend all together?" and the girl laid her hand upon the arm of her dearly beloved twin—the sailor-brother Charlie, and looked fondly into his tanned, weather-beaten face.

"And you know, mother," put in Claud, the eldest of the party, and a personage of some importance at home, "there really is not the smallest claim upon us to entertain this stranger. He is only a connection of yours, not even a relation in the ordinary sense of the term, and he is rich too, I believe, so what can be the necessity for foisting him upon us? Some people might like him for a guest; but you know what we are—we hate being bothered with any other fellow hanging round; so just write and say, No, thank you; and let us rest in peace."

Poor Mrs. Callender looked rather troubled and disturbed. Her four tall boys and girls clustered round her, all leagued together to oppose the arrangement she was desired by her husband to make, and she was not a woman who easily asserted herself when her children were all in opposition. She was, in one sense of the word, too much one of them, and it had always been taken for granted in that house that the mother would see things in a "rational" light, and keep in touch with her sons and daughters.

"Clan C," as Mr. Callender sometimes called his quartet of children, although fast growing up to manhood and womanhood, had never lost the characteristic which had distinguished them from their nursery days of "hanging together," as their father called it, and resenting the intrusion of any stranger into their midst. Instead of delighting, as many boys and girls do, in variety and the companionship of friends and neighbours, they had always preferred being left alone, and were never so truly content as when all together, and free from the constraint imposed by the presence of others. It is a feeling common enough in families at an early stage of their development, but is usually outgrown at an earlier age than with these particular boys and girls with whom we have to do.

Possibly circumstances had had something to do with the long survival of the feeling. Mr. Callender was a country squire of limited means, and had not been able to afford to send his sons to school. They had received excellent instruction from the clergyman of the parish, and Charlie, who had early shown a passion for the sea, had been away on several voyages already; but when he came home, the old feeling of "clannishness" invariably asserted itself, and possibly he was all the more eager to have his brother and sisters all to himself, from the very fact that he was so much separated from them by his calling in life.

As for Claud, his ambition was to go to Oxford, and he was reading hard for a scholarship there. His father, him-

self a university man, was very anxious to give his son this advantage; but he saw a little difficulty on the score of expense. Even if the youth did win a scholarship there would be still many expenses to be met which that did not cover; and income and expenditure ran very close together with Mr. Callender, and had done so ever since the commencement of the agricultural depression, which had so greatly reduced his rent-roll and the value of his property.

Claud was twenty, the twins were seventeen, and Clara came in between them, being nearly nineteen. She was a tall, pretty girl, though her face would have been more attractive had it not been for a tinge of sharpness in the expression, and a sarcastic turn of the lips. As it was, there was something more truly pleasing in Conny's face with its piquant irregular features, framed in soft short curls of a bronze-gold hue as rare as it was beautiful. Conny was under the impression that she was plain, because the boys had called her "carrots," and her delicate little "tip-tilted" nose a "snub;" but as a matter of fact her downy rose-leaf skin, and her big brown eyes, as soft as velvet and heavily fringed with long black lashes, would have given beauty to a far plainer face than hers; and her brothers were gradually awakening to a consciousness that their "ugly duckling," as they had sometimes called her, was turning out to be something very much like a swan.

But to return to the discussion so eagerly taking place this bright June morning.

"My dear children," said Mrs. Callender, pleadingly, "I wish you would listen quietly to me, instead of all speaking at once, and putting everything out of my head by your impetuosity."

"Order, order, order!" cried Claud, laughing. "The mother is going to make a speech. If you interrupt her again, Charlie, I'll punch your head for you."

"Not a speech exactly, my dear," said the mother, "but I should like you to understand things a little better. Ronald Kennedy is an orphan, and a distant connection of mine. His guardian is my first cousin, and that is why he has written to me in this difficulty."

"What difficulty?" asked Clara, as her mother paused.

"Why, you see, my dears, Ronald is not strong, and he has overworked himself very much at Oxford passing what they call his moderations—I daresay Claud understands what they are" (Claud nodded an assent)—"and instead of his going with a reading party as had been arranged, the doctor says he must have entire rest from his books for quite six months, and must 'vegetate' down in the country till after Christmas, when perhaps he may be able to return to Oxford and his studies there."

"But I don't yet see why he need vegetate here," said Charlie. "If he has to play the *rôle* of Nebuchadnezzar at all, why must it be at Clover-Mead of necessity?"

"Well, it is like this. My cousin is just going abroad with his delicate wife, and will not be in England again before next summer at the earliest. Ronald is forbidden to travel, or to do anything but keep perfectly quiet somewhere where it *is* very quiet; and he has made no friends of his own to whom he could go. He is only twenty, and will not come of age till next April, so his guardian feels responsible for him still; and if you wish to know everything, my cousin has offered, if we will take the care of him during this last year of his minority, to pay over to us the yearly allowance of two hundred pounds, left by his father's will for his maintenance during his minority. Then, Claud, your father says that if we had that assistance, he should be able to see his way to sending you to Oxford at Michaelmas or Christmas. It is a very handsome sum to give for Ronald's keep; but my cousin says it is what has been allowed every year since his father died, and that if we take him, we must accept that, as he has been doing all these years. I don't understand these matters myself, but I believe it is an ordinary thing with rich wards."

There was silence for a few moments. The distaste to the proposed arrangement was in nowise lessened by what "The Clan" had heard; but they began to see that their parents were not likely to let a little distaste on their part stand in the way of an arrangement which might be so advantageous to them in other ways.

"And it would be doing a great kindness to Ronald," said Mrs. Callender presently. "He could not possibly go anywhere where there was no mother to look after him—so his guardian says—and the companionship of young people will do him good. He has been always very much of the student. He went too young to college they think, and as he did not easily make friends of the men older than himself, he spent his time too exclusively over his books. He was not strong enough to care much for games, and so, though he has distinguished himself in the schools, he has broken down, and is to be cut off from his studies for some time. That being the case, it is important for him to have the companionship of young people about his own age; and I hope when he comes that you will all be very kind and considerate towards him."

Mrs. Callender looked round her with a little doubt and hesitation, as was but natural. Her sons and daughters were very dear to her, and she knew their soundness of heart; but she could not feel quite the confidence she desired in their surface kindliness or courtesy. They could be very prickly young people to outsiders, and Clara's sarcastic sharpness, Claud's cool superciliousness, and Charlie's boisterous teasing were all held in wholesome awe by some of those persons who had had occasion to provoke their display. The look of disgust, or discontent, upon their faces now was not entirely reassuring.

"*When* he comes, mother! Then do you mean it is actually settled? I thought you had come to consult us. It's not much good consulting us when the thing is really decided," said Clara, her lip curling ominously.

"Well, my dear children, I believe your father has decided, though he told me to come out and speak to you. You ought not to mind a little present discomfort for the sake of Claud, who will benefit so greatly by it. We should all be ready to make some small sacrifice to enable him to do what he so greatly wishes——"

"But I don't call this a small sacrifice," broke in Conny, with unwonted vehemence; "I call it a very great sacrifice indeed—just when Charlie has come home for six months—to have a horrid stranger in the house all the time. I believe Claud would rather give up Oxford altogether than have our nice summer spoilt, when we have been so looking forward to it all these months."

The mother's face took rather a pained expression; she looked at her younger daughter rather reproachfully.

"You too, Conny dear! I had hoped to hear kinder words from your lips. Do you remember, love, what you said to me about those words of our dear Lord's, and how you would like to put them in practice: 'I was a stranger, and ye took Me in'?"

"Oh, but, mother dear," cried Conny, quickly, "that means *poor* people who have no home. I *should* like to do it for them; but this Ronald is so rich——"

"Dear Conny," interposed her mother, "he is none the

less our brother and our neighbour on that account. Are we not specially told how Jesus loved the rich young man? My dear children, I do not wish to lecture you, or distress you; but I do think that as Christians, who have taken the Christian vows upon yourselves, you ought to show a little more of the spirit of self-sacrifice when called upon to do so. If Christ set the example, and 'pleased not Himself,' is it for His followers to think that they can follow in His footsteps if their one aim in life is to please themselves and live for themselves?"

Conny hung her head and was silent for a few moments, then she said softly:

"I did not think of it like that, mother; I was thinking about Claud. I thought he would consider his going to Oxford bought rather dear."

Claud did not make any direct reply, though his brow was gloomy, and Charlie put his hand over Conny's mouth, and dragged her off after him into one of their shady retreats.

"Look here, Con, can't you see it's no good bothering any more? The governor has plainly made up his mind, and, upon my word, I think he's right, though I admit it's a horrid nuisance for us. But never you mind, old girl, we won't be baulked of our fun for any milksop of a puling youth in creation. He's much more the age of the other two, and Claud and he will be bound to do a little fraternising on the subject of Oxford, and old Claud ought not to mind as much as we do, seeing that he is to be the one to profit most by the arrangement. So let us make the best of it, and get our revenge out of fate by playing practical jokes upon the muff when he comes, and keeping out of his way when we want to be alone. I know more of the world than you do, and I assure you he won't want to force himself where he is not wanted. We can go our own way and leave him to mother. Women always like a sick darling to coddle up, and we've never given mother the chance to make much of us like that. She will be very happy over this Ronald fellow, you will see, and we can leave them to their hot possets and flannel vests, and amuse ourselves our own way."

Conny laughed, but made a little grimace at the same time.

"It won't be the same as being alone; but I suppose we can put up with it if we must."

That was pretty much the feeling of all the four—that there was no helping the infliction, and the only thing was to take care that the nuisance did not become intolerable. There was a strong feeling of contempt for the unknown Ronald—the kind of contempt it is often difficult for those who are young and strong not to feel towards one of their own kind when weak and sickly. It is an instinct seen in animals, who set upon the weak and injured and drive them out of existence itself, and it is seen, too, in many savage nations, showing it to be a natural instinct of the human mind; and though civilisation and Christianity have done much to eradicate it, and substitute a better and nobler standard, yet something of the old feeling still lingers, and is most frequently found in those who have had no experience themselves of misfortune or of suffering.

Claud was unconsciously a little jealous of the stranger—jealous of his wealth, his scholarship, his position. Claud had always felt it rather hard that he, the eldest son of Mr. Callender, of Clover-Mead, one of the oldest landed proprietors in the county, should not have had the advantages of a public school, and should have to depend upon the chances of a scholarship for his admission to the university. He had a considerable idea as to what was "due to himself and his position," and he secretly chafed a good deal at the lack of means which obliged them to live so very quietly. And though there was no sense in visiting this irritation upon the innocent Ronald, yet Claud was certainly disposed to like him less because he possessed the very things that he himself most coveted. It was irrational, but then human nature is often that; and what Claud felt for himself, Clara felt even more for him. She said to herself that it was a "shame" that some people should have so little and others everything, and she quite detested Ronald before ever he came, for his easy circumstances, and for the fact that, though no older than Claud, he had already had so much the start of him, and had enjoyed privileges closed to her favourite brother.

However, no private grudge of their own hindered their father from writing a warm assent to the proposition made to him. He was a genial man himself, was amused at the exclusiveness of "The Clan," and thought it would do them a great deal of good to have a new element introduced into their midst. So in the course of a few days all the arrangements were made, and the master of the house himself started off at the appointed time to meet the train which was to bring Ronald Kennedy to them.

"I should like you all to be there to welcome him," said Mr. Callender, with a twinkle in his eye, as he stepped into the phaeton and took the reins. "It will look more friendly, and get all the introductions over together. Mind you are all here when I get back. You will have time for a good game of tennis whilst I am gone."

"Tennis is father's one panacea for all human ills," said Clara, with a little shrug; "I suppose he thinks that it will put us all into a good temper to greet his pet. Well, I suppose we might as well play. The courts are in good condition. And when we are five instead of four, one will never know what it is to have a good even game. The muff will always be expecting to play."

The four brothers and sisters enjoyed their tennis together thoroughly, as well they might, being so very equally matched. Conny was rather stronger than Clara in the game, but then Claud was in far better practice than Charlie, who often did not touch a bat for a whole summer together; but then the sailor's quickness and agility made up to a great extent for his lack of finish, and he was no mean antagonist, despite his assurances that he was "no player."

Mr. Callender drove off to the station, which was some four miles distant. He was rather curious to see what manner of guest he was bringing home with him. He very well understood that Ronald's life under his roof might not be exactly a bed of roses, and he had been frank on the subject with the guardian; but elderly men think little of the slight antagonisms of the young, and that question had been passed over as one of no importance. Mr. Callender wondered if anything had been said to Ronald on the subject.

The train was punctual, and only a few passengers alighted at the small wayside station. Amongst these was a tall, slim youth, dressed with the faultless precision—quite free from foppery—which is one of the salient features of a well-bred Oxford man, who descended leisurely from a first-class carriage, and gave some direction to a porter about his luggage with the air of an experienced traveller, who never troubles to fuss over his belongings himself.

Evidently he did not expect to be met, so that Mr. Callender was able to take a good look at him before introducing himself. The face was in some ways remarkable, and would have been decidedly handsome but for the impression produced just now of its being all brow and eyes.

The features were very good, but worn thin and hollow with over-study and ill-health, and the large dark blue eyes, set in deep caverns, looked too large and too bright for health. Then the lad had evidently grown beyond his strength, and was too tall for his twenty years, and altogether Mr. Callender found no difficulty in understanding why he had been condemned to six months of entire rest and idleness in some quiet place.

"A very clever, interesting, gentlemanly fellow, I should say," was the mental summing up of the Squire; "but I should be very sorry, for all that, to see one of my boys looking as he does now."

And then he went forward and held out his hand.

"Ronald Kennedy, or I am very much mistaken," he said, in his most hearty way. "My name is Callender, and so you will understand why I am here to-day."

"It is very kind of you to meet me, sir," said the young man with a smile that lighted up his face wonderfully, "I did not expect anyone to do that."

"We were afraid you were something of an invalid, my wife and I. So I decided to come for you myself. Are those your traps? There is a cart waiting for them. Shall we go to the carriage now? I hope you are not overdone with your journey. It is a troublesome cross-country route."

"Oh, I do not mind that. I am used to travelling. Everything always goes right if you leave it alone."

"A lesson we country folks are slow to learn. Well, I hope you will pull up with us. You look as if you wanted some of our fine, fresh air. You have been sticking too close to your books, they say."

"Yes, they say so, but I do not much believe it. However, when one is under age there is nothing for it but to submit, and the prescription is certainly a very pleasant one."

The last words were spoken with a sort of graceful courtesy that brought a smile to Mr. Callender's face. Certainly this boy was very unlike either of the pair he would find at home.

"Well, well, we will do our best to make you comfortable amongst us," he said heartily, "but we are only plain country people, and we live very quietly, and in homely fashion."

"That is just the medicine I have been ordered—to keep quiet—and as I have never known much of home life, the homeliness will be a great attraction," said Ronald, the flashing smile giving a character of its own to the wan face with its lines of thought and study. Was it Oxford that had given this polish to his speech and manner, or was it something deeper than that—something his own boys were lacking in, with all their goodness and warmth of heart? The father could ask the question, but he could not answer it, and for the rest of the time little passed beyond a few remarks about the character of the country through which they were driving.

"Here we are at last, and there are your future companions," said Mr. Callender, as the carriage turned in at the gates, and through a gap in the trees the lawn became visible. "My young folks are great at games. Are you a tennis player yourself?"

"I played a little at Oxford," said Ronald, "but I am not really good at it. I liked a skiff on the river whenever I had time for anything of that kind."

And then the carriage drew up, and Mrs. Callender came forth with her motherly welcome to the lad who was to make his home with them for a while.

Tea was waiting under the lime tree that shaded the tennis court, and the bees were humming busily amid the fragrant bloom. The appearance of the stranger interrupted the game, and the players came slowly forward to be introduced.

A well-known Patient in the Workshop. p. 102.

Ronald was not shy, and he was more self-possessed than his hosts, but exceedingly quiet, and he took no share in the buzz of talk that went on as tea circulated. It was a sort of habit with "The Clan" to talk very loud and very fast when any stranger was present, teasing and chaffing each other, and making use of a hundred little family catch-words and phrases which were all but unintelligible to outsiders, as if their wish was to keep them as much in the background as possible. It was not a very pretty or polished habit, but it was really the outcome of their very secluded lives, and was a form of shyness, little as they would have allowed it. Ronald, however, did not appear to mind in the least, or to wish to talk himself, and he only spoke from time to time in a very low voice to Mrs. Callender, who rather nervously endeavoured to draw him into the general conversation. But presently when she asked if he would like to see his room he assented gratefully, and by-and-by she came back saying that Ronald had such a bad headache that he would not appear any more that evening; which announcement was received with a shout of real amusement and derision.

"Go it, milk-sop," cried Charlie, who had never known a headache in his life, and was immensely amused. "I say, mother, the muff is making a brilliant beginning—isn't he now?"

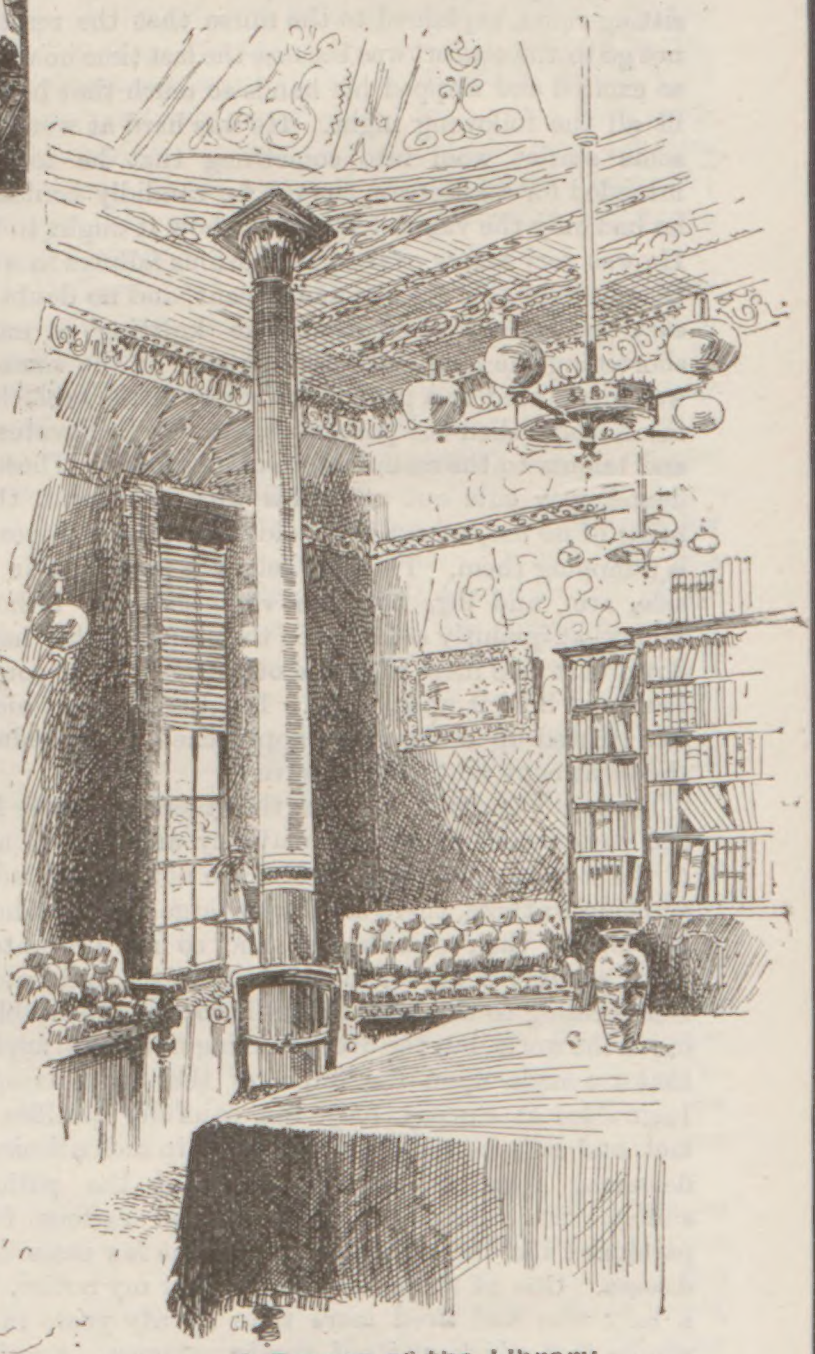
(*Continued on page* 113.)

A PALACE OF PEACE.

New Assembly Hall.

ALMOST the last quotation that would be likely to occur to the visitor who finds himself within the vestibule of the Duke of Sutherland's mansion on Putney Heath is that famous utterance of Dante, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here;" and yet it would be the most appropriate, for the handsome building, with its lovely surroundings, is now, and has been for many years past, a "Hospital for Incurables." Peace, not pain, is the first impression, and nothing that one sees within the spacious chambers and stately corridors can wholly destroy the feeling of rest and quiet that pervades the place. Here and there are faces pinched with pain, and limbs that are deformed and unsightly; yet, for the most part, the patience and cheerfulness that are the prevailing characteristics testify to the success of the endeavour to alleviate the suffering that can never fully be cured. Science and Philanthropy have combined their forces, and whatever the former can devise, the latter is ready to secure in the service of hopeless pain.

The reception-room of the Home (for no one thinks of calling it by its title of Hospital) is a spacious and beautiful apartment fitted up as a library and used as a board-room by the directors. Every morning one of the patients is in attendance here to meet the demands of his fellows for literature to help them through the day. As I ventured to remark upon the number of the books, the matron said that a great many of them are never used. The books that are most in demand are those of a light and amusing character—by no means an exceptional thing among people in good health. It was not difficult to understand; as the lady very justly said, the patients in such a place "want something to read that will help them to get out of themselves." As the steward was engaged, one of the nurses very kindly conducted me over the building, which consists of the original ducal mansion, to which a new wing has since been added, similar in style outside, but even more adapted to the comfort of the patients within. In the largest reception-room a concert was taking place, under



A Corner of the Library.

View from Farm.

the direction of some of the ladies of the neighbourhood. Most of the patients were gathered together to be soothed by the charms of music into momentary forgetfulness of their pain; and very strange they looked, sitting helplessly in their wheeled chairs. The applause that came from hands crippled with paralysis and palsied by rheumatism was naturally rather feeble; but the efforts of the singers were not relaxed by the apparent lack of enthusiasm in the audience. This very kindly effort to entertain the afflicted inmates prevented me from coming into personal contact with all but a few, some of whom were too ill to leave their rooms, and others did not care for music.

One bright-eyed old fellow, whom I saw in the men's sitting-room, explained to the nurse that the reason he did not go to the concert was because the last time he went he got so excited and clapped his hands so much that he felt quite ill all the following night. He was hard at work knitting some scarlet wool into something that he told us was intended for a knee-cap, though he candidly confessed that he had only the vaguest idea as to how it ought to be made. He was very merry over some previous failures in wool-work that he exhibited for our amusement, and no doubt finds an easy mechanical occupation like knitting a means for shortening the long and weary hours. In the same room I was introduced to a gentleman whose little table has been facetiously called the post-office, because he devotes his time and talents to the manufacture of envelopes. These he very dexterously cuts out and folds with one hand, the other being of no use, except as a holder for the envelopes when he is gumming them. The poor fellow is paralysed in the left side, arm, and leg, but was very cheerful, although he somewhat quaintly complained that it made his head hang down that side more than the other; and all he could do, he could not hold it up straight. But the way in which every face lighted up as the nurse approached spoke volumes for the treatment that they receive.

Perhaps I ought to say here that there are in the Hospital 220 patients, of whom the majority are women, and that of the women only about twelve are not maiden ladies. In addition to these, there are a very large number who receive pensions in their own homes, and so are prevented from being entirely a burden on their relatives and friends. It is depressing to think that there is so much incurable suffering in the world, but the overwhelming number of applications that are made upon the funds of the Royal Hospital for Incurables at Putney only too painfully testifies to the fact, and calls for more abundant help in such a desirable and deserving form of charity. Most of the patients are sufferers from chronic rheumatism and various forms of paralysis; but there are, of course, some few cases of spinal disease. One of the latter came under my notice, that of a lady who had lived more than twenty years in bed—a simple fact which of itself speaks volumes. Another lady had been away to undergo an operation at the Middlesex Hospital, and had come back not feeling any better, but rather the worse.

The routine of the life at the Home had been disturbed by the turning out of two or three of the upper bedrooms, which were to be re-painted and whitewashed. The disturbed patients had to be fitted in wherever there was a vacant bed, and some of them were a little upset by the moving. One old lady, who had been moved from a small room upstairs into a larger room on the ground floor, on being asked if she liked the change, gave a very emphatic assent. The bedrooms for the ladies vary in size, the larger rooms holding about six beds, and the smaller rooms three or four. Very bright and pleasant they look, the spotless hangings, the brightly-coloured counterpanes, and the pictures showing up very nicely against the quieter tones of colour with which the walls are painted. I happened to remark to my guide that I did not think the bedrooms for the gentlemen looked quite so nice, but the only difference we could think of was that there were not so many knick-knacks to ornament them. However, the nurse incidentally mentioned that the gentlemen had male attendants, and that helped me at once to understand the difference—they lacked the indefinable charm that a woman's care always imparts to a room. In all the rooms the latest appliances for the relief of suffering were at the disposal of the inmates, and very strange indeed some of the contrivances looked; especially those for helping the patients to lift themselves up or turn themselves over in bed. Besides the usual sitting-room—into which, by the way, most of the patients bring their own wheel-chairs—there is a reading-room and a workshop, neither of them very large, at the disposal of the gentlemen. In the workshop, three out of the four patients who are able to do any carpentering had "knocked off"; but the fourth was as earnestly and eagerly engaged in the making of some little drawers for a cabinet as if his living depended upon it. One of the others laughingly said, as he pointed to the busy workman, "He is not a Union man; he does not go in for the eight-hours movement." There are special dining-rooms for ladies and gentlemen, and individual tastes and wishes are consulted, so far as is possible in such an establishment. Breakfast is served at half-past seven (to the ladies, in their bedrooms); dinner at one in the dining-rooms, except, of course, to those who are too feeble to leave their beds; tea at five; and supper, I think, at nine, but cannot be quite sure. In one of the dining-rooms there are some very beautiful oil paintings, the gift of one of the most generous supporters of the institution—Mr. Frederic Huth; and from what I heard, I should judge that they are duly appreciated by those for whose enjoyment they were provided. The building stands in its own grounds of some twenty-five acres, and the view of the Surrey Hills from the windows, even through the slight haze of a winter afternoon, was very fair to look upon. In the summer the foliage on the trees would of necessity add to the beauty of the scene, without disturbing its peacefulness.

"But for the pain and illness which are the necessary conditions of entrance, this would be a nice place to live in."

The old lady to whom I addressed this remark quickly replied: "Yes, that is true; but some of the visitors who come here say that they would like to be ill so as to live here."

"That," interposed the nurse, "is a wicked thing to say."

"It is all very well to *say* that," was the retort, "but depend upon it, however nice a place may be, one would rather have health and strength."

And there is no doubt that the speaker was right—nothing can make up for the loss of health; but there is something in the peaceful life and comfortable arrangements of the Home which induces longevity. Most of the patients live a great deal longer than they possibly could do under any other circumstances; and though pain cannot be abolished, it is alleviated to the utmost possible extent. Down the wide corridor, like the whisper of an Æolian harp, came the sound of the music from the concert, but the vestibule was quiet and still; and as I passed out into the winter sunlight, the birds were faintly twittering in the leafless trees, and the beautiful home I was leaving looked as though it fully deserved to be called a palace of peace.

J. Fuller Higgs.

MOTHERS AT HOME.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH.

Our House—How to Arrange it.

E it ever so humble, there's no place like home." It is a beautiful sentiment taken as the author, John Payne, meant it, but it may often be read in a very different way. Untidy wives, who spend a good deal of thought and time on their own person and little on the arrangement of their houses, will cause their husbands and children to exclaim, "Yes, you are quite right; there's no place like home—for dirt and discomfort."

Nagging wives will put yet another meaning to the poet's words in their relations' minds: "No place like home—for grumbling and rows."

But, of course, none of us wish our homes to be anything but happy and healthy. The question then follows, How can we soonest make them so? And here I would remind you that the jug which will hold a quart can also hold a pint; and you are not to imagine that things which are necessary to keep a house of eight or ten rooms in a proper condition need not be thought of in a home consisting of only two. On the contrary, the smaller your home, the more need of these precautions.

Roughly speaking, there are but four things really necessary to make a house healthy—air, light, cleanliness, and tidiness. Of course, I am by no means forgetting the all-important points of pure water and good drainage, which are, in a measure, out of the mother's hands. Every one should see to these two matters before taking a house, for without them disease and misery must follow. But the housewife who neglects any of the four things over which she herself has power, will soon turn her home into a hospital or a rubbish-heap.

Let us take these points in their natural order. "Windows," says Florence Nightingale, "when ought they to be open? Say, rather, when ought they to be shut. Windows were made to open; doors were made to shut."

Every window in the house should be opened each morning, even in the winter. During the summer they may continue open; and yet I have often amused myself, when driving through the country, by counting the number of windows open in the cottages. It seems as if even country folks were afraid of God's sweet air, which freshens and beautifies everything.

Bedrooms should be well ventilated; they have no business to be stuffy in the morning, for that stuffiness means that the people sleeping in them have been swallowing poisonous air all night. Chimneys should not be blocked up; and if there is a bedroom without a chimney, get your husband to bore half-a-dozen holes in the door, about the size of half-a-crown. When possible, leave the window open at the top all night; but in the very cold weather put a piece of wood on the window-sill and shut the sash down on it, so that no draught comes in at the bottom, but a space remains between the top and bottom sashes, so causing the fresh air to enter.

If possible, choose a house with a door back and front, so that you can get a current of air right through, once or twice a day. Remember, however, that *a draught* is not good for anyone; fresh air in the biggest doses never did any one any harm, but the smallest draught may kill a delicate child. Some people seem afraid to let the air come near their skin, and yet an air bath is almost as good as a water one; it braces the body, and makes it less susceptible to cold.

Let every bed be left unmade, lying open and uncovered till it has got cold. In this way the bedding will be kept sweet and pure. All bedding should be brushed once a week to get rid of dust.

Next, as to light. Don't be afraid to pull up your blinds and let in all the sun and light you can; we don't get too much of it in this little island of ours, and yet how frightened we sometimes seem to be of the little we do get! It makes me positively angry when I see a young lady holding up a parasol the moment the sun pops his head out from behind a cloud. She is afraid of her complexion, forsooth; yet the dear old sun gives health and beauty, and there's nothing like sunshine for restoring wasted energy.

Let in the light, then, everywhere. A dark house is always an unhealthy one. Do you want an example? Keep a plant in the dark for a time, water it and attend to it as carefully as you like; the result will be a sickly thing hardly worthy of the name it bears. So with your children; want of light will stop their growth, and possibly lead to rickets, consumption, and other diseases.

Don't have any hidden corners, which are really nests for the rearing of dust and disease. Valances round beds and chairs and sofas are an abomination; take them off. Supposing you are cramped for room, and are obliged to keep a few odds and ends of boxes under those articles, surely it is better to *see* them. You won't forget to wipe away the dust then. Oh, if only I could get every mother who reads these papers to understand that dust is unhealthy, how glad I should be! I am not quite sure of the quotation, but I once heard a wiseacre say that dirt was only matter out of place. Let every housewife remember that everything should be in its right place, and send the dirt where it ought to be; and that reminds me to say a word on dust-bins.

"Put it into the dust-bin," says the careless housewife, and the dust-bin becomes a receptacle for everything, from bad fish to rotten apples. They all lie together till the dust-cart comes round, sending up a horrid smell and poisonous air to enter the windows of the houses near. No wonder we have epidemics of typhoid and diphtheria. Get rid of your dust-bins.

Put every scrap of vegetable matter and fish refuse on the fire, burn the dust collected from your rooms, keep your ashes only for the dust-cart. And in the summer, if you have not a fire, make a bonfire in the garden. As to bones, do you really think that the few halfpence you get after weeks of storing the mouldy, putrid, smelly things repay you for the nastiness and danger? I doubt it.

But I am afraid you will think I have run into my third point while still speaking of my second. The fact is that light is so intimately connected with cleanliness that it is difficult to separate them. You must keep your windows clean if you would let the sun shine through them, you know.

You sweep your floors; do you sweep your walls? If not, mind you do it in future once a week. Turk's head brooms can be bought for the purpose, but a duster can be tied over an ordinary soft broom, and it will reach to the ceiling of most rooms, though you may have a little difficulty about

the staircases. Some people seem to think a cobweb dangling from the ceiling is a necessary evil; they just run their hand through the web and put it in the fire, forgetting that the root of the evil is still above them in the shape of long-neglected dust.

Wipe the tops of your cupboards with a damp house-flannel once a week; if you can dip it first in a little Sanitas or carbolic acid, so much the better; but I have purposely refrained from advising things which cost money, lest you should compare me to the doctors, who tell a poor man he ought to live on champagne and mutton chops.

Elbow grease is, indeed, the one thing necessary to keep our homes healthy; but it needs to be applied "with brains, sir," as the painter said when he was asked what he mixed his colours with.

If you have any choice in the matter, remember that distempered walls are much healthier than papered. I do my own nursery and boys' room every spring myself, and I will tell you how to do it. First of all, you must wash the walls well with a sponge, and this may be done as often as you like in the year. It will remove all the dirt except that caused by gas, and you may possibly find they will not want distempering again. I need hardly say that if you are going to distemper a room which has been previously papered you must take the paper off first. This is a tiresome job. I did it once, but don't wish ever to do it again, thank you.

Get two lumps of whiting, two pennyworth of size, and two pennyworth of powdered blue. Put the whiting soaking over night in half a pail of water. In the morning pour off all the thin water; you will leave about half in the pail thickened by the whiting. Stir it up well with a stick, pour in the size (previously melted in an old saucepan), and then add the colour. You must remember that it will look much lighter on the walls than it does in the pail. Wash your walls well with the mixture. It is prettier, cleaner, and more wholesome for bedrooms than wall-paper.

Keep everything as bright as you can. Crystal soap will make your brass handles shine; whitey-brown paper will keep your drinking-glasses bright, and there's nothing that beats a damp newspaper for cleaning looking-glasses, with a dry one to polish them with.

Finally, be tidy yourself, and insist on tidiness with your children. It is just as easy to put a thing in the right place as in the wrong, and why should a busy mother be for ever tidying up after her children?

"An Englishman's house is his castle," we proudly say; let us see that we make the castle a happy, healthy, cheerful refuge from the storms outside.

"Home, indeed, may be a sure haven of repose from the storms and perils of the world," says Sir John Lubbock. "But to secure this we must not be content to pave it with good intentions, but must make it bright and cheerful."

"If our life be one of toil and suffering, if the world outside be cold and dreary, what a pleasure to return to the sunshine of happy faces and the warmth of hearts we love!"

NIGHTINGALE SONGS.

"God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."—Job xxxv. 10.

When other singers sing not,
When other voices fail,
There is a song, a sweeter song,
That floats along the vale.
Heard in the shadow stillness,
More beautiful and sweet
Than any song amidst the throng
Who round the sun-throne meet.

When earthly singers sing not,
When sun-tuned voices fail:
There is a song, a sweeter song,
That fills life's quiet vale.
Heard in the lonely silence,
Perhaps with strange surprise,
A song from Heaven, divinely given,
An echo from the skies.

Oh, may we ever hear them,
The songs God only gives,
The music in the darkness,
The joy that ever lives.
And then, His songs repeating,
Be midnight singers too,
With all our powers in shadowed hours,
Praising as angels do.

My lines were penned,—I listened,
The singer of the night
Was singing in the sunshine
When all around was bright.
Who singeth songs in sorrow
Will ever sing in joy,
Hath learned a song Heaven will prolong,
Nor day nor night destroy.

"The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me."—Ps. xlii. 8.

William Luff.

"The singer of the night was singing in the sunshine."

OUR NURSERIES.

THE room that requires the most care and thought expended on it, in a house where there is a family, is the nursery. For this is our garden, where our tender human plants are to thrive and grow, and it is here that the weeding of bad habits and the growth of good ones should be carefully attended to. However, I do not intend to touch upon the all-important subject, the training of our little ones, but I do wish to say a few words on the nursery itself. For as children are so easily influenced for good or evil, their surroundings should be bright and cheerful, while an atmosphere of love should be over every part of our little garden. We must remember that what the sun is to our flowers so love is to our children. Don't be afraid of giving a little praise or showing some admiration either of what they have done or of what they are, through the fear of making them conceited. Of course, I do not mean too much praise, but a little now and then is good for everyone. I remember a friend of mine, when a child, would never, if she could help it, look in a looking-glass, as she was so ugly. She hated to go out, and especially to see strangers. When she grew older, she found that instead of being ugly, she had been a pretty child. And on looking back now she sees that it was a mistake to withhold all praise. We may think this very foolish, but we must remember that what seems nothing to us who are grown up is very real to our children, and her fancied ugliness was a real grief to this child.

So show them that you love them, that you like them to be with you, and tell them that our Heavenly Father loves to see them pretty, and that the prettiest face is a smiling face, and the ugliest face is a frowning face. But, above all, wear a smile yourself. This is not always easy, I know; what with the daily worries brought by small means, and often ill-health, to wear a cheerful countenance is extremely difficult; but the more we take our daily little trifling cares and worries to the Lord Jesus, the easier this will become.

In some houses where there are children we find no nursery. This should not be, unless, of course, they have grown too old for the nursery and have a schoolroom, for one of the rights of our little ones is a separate apartment where they know they can make as much noise and as much mess as they please, within reasonable limits, without fear of reproof.

The pleasantest, brightest, airiest room in the house should be selected if we want our tender plants to thrive. It should, if possible, be a large room; but if this cannot be, at any rate let it be a sunny one; the morning sun is the best, so a south or east aspect is preferable to north or west.

If you can afford to have a night and day nursery, provide them by all means; but two rooms cannot always be spared. In a city where the children cannot be running in and out of a garden all day, the best location for a nursery is one of the upper stories, where there is no danger of disturbing mother or father, and everything for nurse's use can be kept on the same floor. This plan, if it can be adopted, saves a great deal of work.

The windows should be low, but barred outside to prevent accidents, and if possible let the lower panes be of stained glass, each pane a different colour, and the fairy-like landscapes to be seen through them will be enchanting. I can well remember in my childhood there was just such a window overlooking the garden, and I and my sisters were never tired of gazing through first one pane, then another, comparing the difference each colour made in the view. When we looked through a blue pane, all looked cold; through a yellow, there was bright sunshine; through a red, the garden was immediately on fire; and surely what is an attraction to one child will usually be found to be equally attractive to others.

The windows should open top and bottom. Ventilation is a very important consideration in the nursery. In summer time the windows should be open day and *night*, and in winter should be opened wide while the children are out for their walk. Many nurses and even mothers have a horror of fresh air, forgetting that no one can be healthy without it. In the height of summer I have seen a nurse put her charges to bed in the bright light of the setting sun, tuck them up in blankets and quilt, then shut the window top and bottom, lock it, and draw down the blind. Now, why did she shut the window? Afraid of the night air? At night time can you have anything else but night air? and surely it is better to have it fresh than the close, impure air of a shut-up bedroom. Florence Nightingale held that the air during the night in a large town or city was purer than in the day, as there was no smoke or dust raised by the constant traffic to taint it. Be that as it may, I think you will find your children's and your own health much improved by keeping the window open at night, unless in very cold weather.

The nursery walls should be covered with pictures. I know one little girl who has a lovely nursery, the walls of which are entirely covered with pictures pasted over the wall-paper; some are prints, but most of them are coloured ones taken from the magazines, and some of them are really beautiful. There is a special kind of wall-paper sold for nurseries. The designs are quaint and pretty, forming an endless amusement to the children, who never seem to grow weary of looking at the pictures, or listening to the oft-told tales which they illustrate.

The floor should not be covered entirely with carpet; a stained flooring is by far the best, with a few brightly-tinted rugs laid down. The little ones like to play with these, as they do so splendidly for make-believe tents, roofs of houses, etc., and, furthermore, they are so easily shaken. Many mothers say that the nursery must be washed *every day*, but in how many houses can this be done? In very few; not where there is only one small nursemaid and a servant-of-all-work kept. No; I think if the floor be swept and rugs shaken every day, and once a week the room thoroughly cleaned, it is quite enough. Teach the children to put things away tidily; this is half the battle in keeping a room clean and nice.

If the fire-place can be fitted with tiles illustrating scenes from Bible stories, the children will be found to cluster round the fire and beg mother or nurse to tell them a story about the pictures, which, if one could go on long enough, would keep them amused for hours, and at the same time instruct them in the best of all knowledge; and the instruction thus gained they will never forget. Here is an idea for elder sisters—paint such tiles yourselves. I know of a mother who painted such on purpose for her children. If you cannot paint figures, from flowers, birds, and insects instruction and amusement can be gained.

A nursery should not be without its cupboards. One should be kept for food and the necessary crockery, while another might be given to the children to stow away their toys; or it would be better for each child to have a shelf to

itself, and taught to keep it tidy. An untidy shelf should never be passed over without notice and reproof. Then, what makes a more beautiful doll's-house than a cupboard? It can be fitted up so nicely and easily.

A good addition to the nursery is a swing that can be hung up at will in the doorway. This will form a fund of amusement while nurse is busy. But, besides providing *recreation*, we must provide *instruction*, which, while not wearisome, will yet strengthen and refine the mind. It has often been found that the boy or girl who has been taught to take an interest in birds or plants has grown more gentle and loving. Bearing this in mind, a stand or shelf in the window, full of easily-cultured plants, should be given to the children, mother, of course, teaching them how to watch and tend them. Children generally take a delight in this kind of thing when it is simply explained, and this part of a child's education should on no account be neglected. Also, let them have their pets, so long as they are old enough to take care of them; and if they want a tray of silkworms, do not refuse. They keep entirely to the leaves in the tray, not caring to wander. It is most interesting to watch them spin the silk for the cocoon, the silkworm finally disappearing, leaving behind him and around him a ball of yellow silk. Then, if mother takes the cocoon and throws it into a bowl of warm water, she can unwind the silk, displaying at last, to the wondering gaze of the little ones, the brown chrysalis instead of the silkworm they expected to see. In a few weeks, if it is kept in bran, the white moth will emerge from it. This will lay eggs, which by-and-by hatch into silkworms. Let the children observe and see all this, and you will be teaching them one of the greatest wonders of natural history.

In conclusion, I would venture to remark that if mothers would only be more thoughtful in fitting up a room for their children, by making the very *necessities* a source of entertainment and instruction, they would render them a delight and pleasure to all, instead of a nuisance, as they are in so many homes. Our little ones *ought* to be like beams of sunshine in our homes; if they are not, there is something wrong in the management somewhere. Flood them with sunshine from your own hearts, and they will give it back to you with interest.

BELLA JOHNSON.

THE MOTHER'S GRIEF.

IT was midnight, but no sleep came to that mother's aching head to calm its hot throbbing.

Strange rumours had reached her that day of her Claude, and while she excused his conduct to others, her spirit sank within her as she thought of him, once the pride and joy of his father's heart, her only boy.

Amid the stillness and hush of night her own lonely heart was ready to burst.

She got up, took a small key and opened a drawer, and lifted the clean white paper with tender care, revealing to her sight treasures that revived the memory of the past; and, placing them one by one under the light of the candle, she fondly looked at a picture-book, a little dress, a toy, a lock of hair, a pencil, and a letter; then taking up a portrait, and holding it close to the light, and wiping her tear-dimmed eyes, she gazed long and earnestly with all the love of the mother heart beaming in her face; and clasping it to her she sank into a chair. "Oh, my precious boy! surely an enemy hath done this. He was so pure, so clever, and so loving. Could I remember him only as such, and know he was in heaven now, even as I wept over his loss, I could be happy. But now my Claude—a drunkard!" And she groaned aloud and shuddered at the word. "My Claude, whose lips were pure, now tainted by the breath of sin. My Claude, with eyes so clear and honest, now wearing a false, strange light. Why have I lived to see this?"

She rose, and, kissing the image of her boy, placed the relics of those happier days away and locked them out of sight; then kneeling down she prayed in her agony, "Lord, call the prodigal home; call loudly, Lord, to my boy—my only one—rob Satan of his prey. Only Thy voice can reach him now. Oh, call my boy."

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Ah, mother, broken-hearted woman, does no sin crouch at thy door? When that treasure of your love was in your guardianship did you weigh well your vast responsibility? He was your own fair child, and you little dreamed an evil one was watching to sow the seeds of wrong. He was so amiable and pleading, and the tempter looked to him so fair, and you yielded, did not warn; yea, more, did not avoid the appearance of sin yourself, never prayed with him. Your love blinded your eyes, and you thought all was right. The god of this world was too sharp for you, and imperceptibly he encamped his forces round the lad and seized him, led him captive at his will.

May God, in His great compassion, hear your cries. He alone can undo the chain that so firmly binds your son.

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Mothers, while the little feet patter restlessly over the floor, seek to guide your children in their games, enter cheerfully into their play, and win their perfect confidence and trust, that to you they shall ever turn for counsel, and let them see in you their early model.

While the breath is pure tell them the danger of those little habits that seem so nearly right, yet lead to wrong. Talk with them of the snares that are laid all along the way for the unsuspecting and the young.

Tell them, oh! for Christ's sake, tell them it is the first glass begins to toll their knell! It is the first pipe forms the early link in the chain that will enthrall. Teach them 'tis only noble to be pure and good, and only safe to shun temptation, and at the outset learn to say "No" to self-indulgence in doubtful things.

Oh, woman, honoured indeed of God. It is to you He gives this charge, you He entrusts with the future history of lives. As to your care He sends a living being, He says, "Take this child, nurse it tenderly, train it up carefully, set its feet in right paths, teach it My laws, guide it by wise example, and when thou comest to My home above to say, 'Here are the children Thou gavest me,' then will I pay thee *full* wages, such as thou didst never expect."

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Stay, mothers, if this is to be your joy and crown of rejoicing, you must yourselves be Christ's, or, however good your intentions are, you will fail; patience will not bear the strain. First see to it that He is yours and you are His. Then take every responsibility as from your Saviour's hand, and seek His strength and grace to fulfil your trust. Sink

not beneath your many chains, but ever "lift up your eyes unto the hills from whence cometh help." Let every action be free from blame, your habits in the home consistent with the name you bear.

Never tolerate beneath your roof an indulgence that savours of sin or would wound your Lord.

Pray earnestly for each child, and mark well the difference of dispositions that you may know how to deal with each, lest what would help the one may cause the other to rebel. Win their souls to Jesus. Through you may they behold the beauty of the Christian life, and desire no other course. Wonderful gift of motherhood! To you 'tis granted to hold a key to the soul of your child, to make first impressions upon life and character, to press upon the opening mind the stamp of Jesus.

Take humbly and prayerfully your blessed mission, ask His help and grace, and keeping close to Christ yourself, may you be spared that mother's agony over her prodigal boy.

S. Harvey-Jellie.

A VILLAGE WELL.

IT fell to us once to lead the van of the great army of tourists that yearly passes by or halts at a certain little Swiss village among the mountains. It was early in the season, though the first and most beautiful of the summer months was nearly ended, and St. John's day had dawned and died, for here in this high latitude the small harvest of English gold is gathered in a few bright autumn weeks. We were not expected. Our landlady, the lanky, red-haired youth who was also gardener, valet, anything you please, and Marthe, the deftest, kindliest of handmaids, were all standing at the door, it is true; but they were not looking for *us*. The *diligence* that rattles its merry course downhill to the south, and the *diligence* that crawls its dusty way to the east, had already gone upon their travels; the jingle of the harness bells and the resonant crack of the driver's whip had long died off on the still air; night was coming; the Swiss babies were tucked in their high wooden cradles, and no dream of arriving guests troubled the placid complacency of the three honest faces that met us as we turned the corner.

It is good, sometimes, surely, to be the first—to be too soon, to be unhoped for. We were a diffident trio of travellers, not anxious to court an effusive welcome, yet the broad smile on our landlady's lips touched us pleasantly; we had journeyed far, we were dusty and weary, our luggage was of the most modest scantiness, yet our hostess of "The Crown" made us feel as if we were her dear and honoured friends. We were swept into the *salon;* all the good people assisted in the most amiable manner at the arrangement by which it was agreed we were to be fed, housed, and mothered for a certain round sum of *francs* per day. He of the red hair hung about to pronounce his benediction on the bargain.

"Ya, ya!" our good hostess beamed and nodded, "for *you* a reduction must be made; for *you* we depart from our usual charges. Let not money be spoken of between us, for are you not the first of our honoured guests?"

Marthe, the stiff-bodiced, chimed in with a clenching word; we accepted the compliment. It is a great sweetener of life to believe that all the pleasant speeches made to you are also true speeches; so we stifled the impertinent recollections of certain acquaintances whose enthusiastic, "*Only* four and a half francs a day, my dear creature, and *so* clean and nice!" had sent us hither. We reminded each other that times had changed; that Bædeker was fallible; for the matter of that, he would be captious, indeed, who could complain.

Our village—we call it ours because we were the pioneers, as it were, the first summer discoverers of this idyllic spot—nestles among circling hills. One reaches it by a long upland valley, through which, for uncounted miles, a river runs—a river of many moods, raging and brawling before you turn the last bend, but quiet here, its restlessness all spent, sedate and still as the hamlet itself.

There is in all but a handful of houses clustered about the church, but on the fir-crowned hills châlets are perched, châlets with deep green banks of surrounding verdure that show emerald against the background of sombre wood. From our balcony these houses look like the toy houses one buys in the wood-carvers' shops at Berne or Interlaken; one almost thinks one could lift the lid and find a velvet-lined box within; with but a little encouragement to the imagination, one can even smell the glue! One of these conceits—mere playthings of houses as they look—set on the edge of a steep wall of cliff, fills you with a spasm of horror as you gaze at it. You begin to wonder if the children of that house are tethered, as one hears that they are—or is it a quaint travellers' tale?—on the forbidding shore of some Norwegian fjord. What does it feel like up there, swung mid-way between earth and sky? what differences upon the face of this old world of ours does the eye discover from that high vantage ground? We promise ourselves that we shall go some day and learn; but that day does not come.

For the most part we are content to sit on our flower-decked balcony, and to conduct our researches from that comfortable resting place. We have none of Carlyle's scorn for the inactive position of "a passive bucket to be pumped into;" on the contrary, to sit in the sun, and welcome with hospitality every new impression that strays our way, has an enduring charm for us. There is nothing to do nor to see—no waterfalls, no waiters, no Vauxhall illuminations. There is a château; two of the "best families" are said to live in it, and it is a picturesque enough dwelling, with its high-pitched roof and weedy garden, but the "best families" have the good sense to enjoy its amenities in private. Besides it, there is nothing; that is, if you count as nothing woodland walks and meadows, sweet "homes of unmarketable beauty," hill-sides mighty in their solitude. Bædeker has displayed a charming reticence about our village; two lines are devoted to it, and one of them has for its theme the chaplain who, wise man, comes not before his congregation. In August he may find many to listen, but we shall not be of the number.

Beneath us is the fountain, the centre round which the life of the place gathers. Every conceivable thing is washed there, from the windows of our neighbours' houses removed

"Our village nestles among circling hills." p. 108.

bodily, to the lettuce for supper. All the world seems to sup on salad; it is carried away in clothes-baskets, crisp and shining from its bath; our neighbours opposite consume it in our sight. There is a great frankness in the life of our village friends; they care little to have any secrets from us. Already we begin to know the pleasant homely faces, something, too, of the story each might have to tell had we the wit to read it. What confidences are exchanged while the water trickles unheeded into the big wooden dishes. What greetings between life-long neighbours; yet it is a grave folk, sober with a solemnity that is more than Scotch. One feels that something of the vaster grandeur of their hills has touched their lives; they smile seldom and more staidly than ourselves. The children, too, are grave; little old men and women before their time. They have but one fashion of play that we have seen—a sort of dancing measure about the well or fountain, in which a handkerchief is tossed about from time to time. They laugh a little then, and we hear their shrill, rhythmic "*Ein, zwei, drei!*" often repeated. One little mite who is lame sits in a small corner-chair, and knits with a preternatural air of hurry and importance, and with but a remote interest in the hazards of the game. Her fingers are always flying while the others do her playing for her.

Yet, it must be told that life goes by to an easy enough measure; there is distinctly no high pressure here, no breathless race after the speeding moments, no crowding out. There is ample time for all things; time even for our postman, an old man in a shabby linen blouse, to exchange universal greetings while he delivers his budget. We watch his deliberate progress without impatience; it is inconceivable until you try it in what a monotonous sameness one can bring oneself to live, and how even a desire for tidings of the larger world comes to be tutored out of one. Good cheer or evil, we are in no more haste for it than for to-morrow's dawn. It is well to have this philosophic calm, for whether there is life or death in his bundle our messenger will not quicken his step. He sits down on all the benches—and *their* number is legion—while he slowly searches his leather pouch; he lights his pipe and whiffs.

meditatively awhile; sometimes he refreshes himself with a glass of thin white wine. It is as who should say: "Believe me, brother, there is no cause for haste; good news can wait without spoiling, and as for evil, who would choose to meet it before he need?" So we look on with but vaguely stirred interest, and the slumbrous peace of this little spot enfolds us, too.

At our feet our porter, gardener, man of all work or of no work, makes a pretence of weeding. He sits upon a wooden box; when he has extracted a tuft of the grass that grows richly between the stones, he takes a long rest, he moves his box to the next green spot, and so he weeds. Suddenly the place is stirred as by an electric shock; the lounging figures rise from the benches, heads are thrust from green-shuttered windows. There is a sound in the distance as from an oncoming train, or is it thunder, wind, or wild discordant music, pipes of Pan, shrieks of bagpipe? The sound grows in volume, rolling in from every side, jingling, twinkling, clanging—an indescribable uproar. Then, stepping over the little bridge, comes a countless herd of sleek, dun-coloured cattle, big, well-cared for creatures. Foremost three step proudly, shaking their heads out of vanity or pleasure in the rattle of the bladder-like appendages that swing under their noses. These, the leaders, are followed by a long train; clock-tower bells, dinner-bells, hand-bells, everything but dumb-bells, each beast making its own music. From the opposite side comes another stream—more clashing, booming, piping; it is pandemonium, but it is a great moment, too, and we watch while the handsome herdsmen clank glasses below, and drain them. Then, the straying drove is gathered into a huge dun-coloured cloud, and so passes away, leaving us with a blank sense of a fallen curtain, and an empty stage.

We shall hear no more the tinkle in our early morning dreams. There are but a few goats left in the village. The young girls have gone to the high Alps, and the stalwart lads. We shall miss them on Sunday in their bravery of velvet and lawn, their drapery of silver chains and crowns of light brown plaits, and the broad hats with each a peacock's feather or a sprig of edelweiss stuck jauntily in it.

One might live here and die here, sleeping soundly enough on the green hillside; and, perhaps, on the whole, humanity might be the better for more lives lived in this slumbrous seclusion.

But one morning we wake from a dream of a larger and fuller life beyond the glaciers on which the sun is shining, and the old craving for a liberal horizon, for the fellowship of men and women who toil and aspire, leaps up within us. Crack the long whip, jingle the merry bells! We, too, are off and away to the High Alps of culture, art, and civilisation. Good-bye, beautiful valley of rest; we have loved your brooding peace, but the world is wide!

HOME INDUSTRIES.

BY R. COCHRANE.

When all things are properly balanced the town acts on the country, and again the country influences the town. The tendency of town life is to deprive one of leisureliness, of individuality, and men and women are ground down into one or many conventional moulds and patterns. In the country one has to fight against intellectual and moral stagnation, and it is difficult to realise in the free air and abundant elbow-room, the life of those dwellers in the murky city who have bad air, and too little change and elbow-room. The country can give the dweller in the town freedom, freshness, and change. The town can awaken the dweller in the country to a more vigorous life intellectually and morally. There is no better safeguard against the stagnation of village life than some practical home industry. Healthy minds naturally gravitate in hours of leisure towards some hobby; it may be gardening, bee-keeping, wood-carving, sculpture, music, vocal or instrumental, painting, fret-work, embroidery, etc. Minds with little individuality or impulse need stimulus and direction. Such stimulus and guidance is supplied by the organisation known as the Home Arts and Industries Association, commenced about six years ago, and which already counts 450 classes at work in England, Scotland and Ireland.

In discussing the work of this Association, let us think for a moment of the innocent pleasure and profit derived from some home industry into which we can put our heart, and which serves, in the long run, some useful purpose. How much a man is saved from bad company, the public-house, and listless, vacant hours! He discovers that happiness is not in idleness, and that frequently the truest rest is got by change of employment.

In youth, the restless, imitative boy, in making water-mills, machinery, or sketching, or carving, may be, so to speak, uttering in hard facts the prophecy of his future. Think of George Stephenson and his toy engines and water-mills, his cobbling of shoes and clock-cleaning, and what came of it. James Nasmyth with his turning-lathe making spinning tops, or forging and hammering; young Bessemer modelling in clay; young Millais with his sketches; or Hugh Miller with his distinct leanings towards literature. What a noble use the last named made of his leisure; he made himself a geologist, and an unsurpassed master of English.

The Home Arts and Industries Association was founded to spread a knowledge of artistic hand work among the people, the instruction to be given in a manner which shall develop the perceptive faculties and manual skill of the pupils. The instruction in wood-carving, repoussé work in metal, basket-making, etc., is given voluntarily at the homes of the teachers, or in rooms provided for the purpose. The central studio of the Association is at the Royal Albert Hall, London, where there are training classes for teachers in the arts. The various classes throughout the country are provided with designs, medals, and leaflets of elementary instruction. An exhibition of the best work done in the classes is held yearly, when awards are given, and the best work is sold. By all these means it is hoped that the eyes and fingers of the pupils may be trained; the idle hours of lads and girls at the age when they have left school, and before they have taken up a regular trade may be filled up. It is in the line of a revival of the old handicrafts which once flourished in England, and may lead those who take it up to make their own homes beautiful.

It is encouraging to know that the classes formed by the Association in London, are working with undiminished

success; those founded by H. R. H. the Princess of Wales, at Sandringham, also continue to make progress. Wood-carving appears to hold the first place in Ireland, some of the designs being taken from the MSS. of the 7th and 8th centuries, drawn by the Irish monks. Needlework and knitting are also popular. In Scotland private classes are held by ladies for instruction in embroidery and stocking knitting. The manufacture of hand-made linen has been revived in one district. Lady Reay has succeeded the late Lady Rosebery as President of the Edinburgh branch, and the Earl of Wemyss and March presided at the last annual meeting.

The Princess of Wales pays the expenses connected with the Alexandra Industrial school at Sandringham. She also superintends its management, and takes a personal interest in the progress of the pupils. The subjects are wood-carving, brass and copper repoussé, bent and forged iron, cut and embossed leather, sewing, dress cutting, making up, knitting, and plain cookery. Men and boys work once a week at wood-carving, and once at brass and iron. Sewing is taught every day, and plain cookery given in courses of four weeks in the kitchen connected with the girls' department. The sum of 4d., paid by the girls for a dinner of soup, meat, vegetables, and pudding, pays the expenses of the cookery department. At Ashbridge hand-spinning is taught; wood-carving at Ascot; at Bristol, Birmingham, Leamington, Nottingham, Southampton and other English towns large and small the work goes on; wood-carving being very common we observe. In over a dozen districts in London there are teachers doing the good work. In the Scottish classes wood-carving is also very popular. Miss Gertrude Martineau, daughter of Rev. James Martineau, while rusticating in the neighbourhood of Aviemore, in the South of Elginshire, teaches drawing and wood-carving to twenty-six pupils in the library rooms of Rothiemurchus. In the Island of Harris, about 1,000 women work at home in spinning, dyeing, weaving, and knitting.

The Countess of Aberdeen gave a delightful address at the opening of the Eastern Counties Branch of the Scottish Home Industries Association, at Dundee, in February last. She said, "There was a cry for the need of technical education from all thoughtful people throughout the country. We seek to meet the child from the kindergarten or the school, the farm lad or lassie after their work is done, every factory girl, every working man, and we invite them to take up a hobby of their own. Without a hobby it is said no human being can be quite happy. Through this hobby we undertake that they shall educate head and hands, they shall make their leisure moments delightful to themselves, they shall beautify their homes, and not only this, but they shall sensibly add to their financial resources, and through these to those of the nation. The mischief, and worse than mischief, which absorbs growing, high-spirited boys and girls who have no delightful piece of carpentering or painting or embroidery to do; the hours of lounging and loafing which end in the public-house, which are all but too natural to men who have no home hobby; the sweethearting which rests on no solid attachment, but which merely serves to while away empty evenings, and which too often ends in ruined lives, or wretched, miserable homes"—all this was provided against. The province of the Committee was to foster home industries in such a business-like way, that they might be able ultimately to hand them over to trade. Butter-making, and supplying the market with good, fresh eggs was another branch of their work. The Association Depôt in London, opened last July, where good and saleable articles are received, was said to be doing well. The Inverness and Glasgow branches collected a fund, by which home-made tweeds and stockings were bought outright, and sent up to London for sale. The value of the articles is then returned to the branch, the percentage added in London for expenses only being kept by the depôt.

Amongst the exhibits at Dundee were tiny brass horizontal engines, a miniature ship, fret-work, wood-carving, an antique cabinet, an inlaid eight-day clock, a set of brushes made by a farm-servant. Then there was a book filled with leaves of trees, mounted by a boy; a horse and cart, and the inevitable cookery exhibits. There was a model switchback railway, and many pictures. A successful industrial exhibition of this nature was held in Glasgow recently.

Even without necessary and systematic training how much may not the willing mind of husband, wife, and children, do to make the home beautiful, and even add a trifle to the income. With training much more may be done. One has only to glance at the miscellaneous collection of articles in the industrial sections of one of our exhibitions to see what willing hands can do—locomotives, draught-screens, pictures, embroidery, fern-cases, and a hundred other things, useful and ornamental, which speak of hours of pleasant occupation, finding its reward in increased facility of working, and in the joy of occupation of hand and mind.

Long before the establishment of the Home Industries Association many were acting on its aims and objects. We have an example in the Misses Fergusson, of Broomlee House, West Linton, Peeblesshire, who so stimulated this spirit that a very creditable annual sale of the materials made in the district is held at West Linton. Miss Fergusson has also adorned the interior of the parish church in quite a wonderful manner by her tasteful wood-carving. Mr. Ruskin's efforts to stimulate the home industry of weaving, in the Lake district, and in the Isle of Man are well-known. All honour and prosperity to those who do likewise.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

Lace will take its place amongst the first ranks as usual for summer wear; hence we give an illustration of a shoulder cape, fig. 17, which may, we trust, be useful to those who are desirous of renovating and making up their own materials. Almost without exception shoulder capes will have a yoke front and back, embroidered, braided or beaded on silk, satin, cashmere, etc., and trimmed round with a lace (in most in-

stances) to come just above the waist of the same, or a contrasting shade, as shown; whilst others will have narrow lace at the front and back, with three-quarters of a yard of lace pleated into box-pleats on each shoulder, and hanging straight down to the depth or width of the lace.

The month of July brings to many of us the thought of a holiday at the seaside or in the country, while the younger members of the family revel in the thought of a long holiday from school and lessons, with plenty of time to play cricket or tennis.

For seaside wear no material will be found more useful than a navy blue serge, especially for the young people, who love to roam about and play with the sand at their own sweet will, which often means getting a little nearer to the water than is prudent, the result being a shower-bath on a small scale, much to the detriment of the young ladies' clothes.

Fig. 17.

Flannelette also makes cheap, effective holiday dresses, and does not require as much getting up as an ordinary cotton dress. For instance, a blue, or pink and white striped flannelette, trimmed with broad white military braid, will look very pretty; and a sailor hat with a band of the braid around it will be a suitable finish to this costume.

Fig. 18 consists of a skirt and blouse, with cap to match, and is suitable for a girl from ten to seventeen years of age. The model costume was made of striped and plain pink-and-white flannel. The blouse is shaped by under-arm and shoulder seams, and the closing is made by means of lacing. At the neck is a sailor collar, above which is a standing collar that is turned over. The fulness at the bottom is regulated by a tape drawn through the hem made in the lower edge. The stylish shirt sleeves are gathered and finished with narrow wristbands. Numerous attractive combinations may be developed in a blouse of this kind, the plain material being used for wristbands, and for one or both of the collars. The blouse may be conveniently worn with any style of shirt which may be of similar or contrasting fabric. Eight yards of single width material will be required for making this skirt and blouse, the cuttings of the dress being used for making the cap. Pointed sections stiffened with canvas are united to form the crown, and a peak that is also stiffened with canvas is seamed to the front of the crown. The cap should be lined with silk or white muslin to cover the stiffening.

Fig. 18.

Fig. 19 shows young lady's tennis garments, which consist of a jacket and blouse. Navy blue and cream serge were here chosen for the jacket. The stylish adjustment is performed by under-arm and side gores, and a curving centre seam that terminates at the top of hemmed coat-laps. The loose fronts are reversed with the rolling collar to form broad lapels that taper to points with cream serge, the facing extending to the lower edge of the garment. All the edges are finished with machine stitching. The coat-shaped sleeves are gathered at the top to present the fashionable curve over the shoulders, and the wrists are trimmed with round cuff facings of the cream material, each of which is decorated at the top with three rows of machine stitching, the side pockets matching the cuffs in colour and decoration.

The blouse which is here shown is made of nun's veiling, which is shaped by shoulder and under-arm seams and closed at the front with button and button-holes. The lower edge is turned under and stitched for a casing, and through this a tape or elastic is passed to draw the fulness nicely to the figure at the waist, below which the blouse droops in characteristic fashion. The sleeves are in shirt-sleeve style; they are gathered at the top and bottom, and finished with wristbands. At the neck is a standing collar, and in the same seam is joined a deep sailor collar. The colour here chosen was cream, with pale blue collar and wristbands. The blouse is worn with a full round skirt (which is always desirable for out-door sports), with a band one-eighth wide to match in colour the trimming on the blouse. Figured, spotted, striped, or plain French flannel, tricot, Coutle cloth, flannelette, serge, and all washable textures may be employed in developing the model. Combinations of colours will be effective, and white collars and wristbands will often appear on a blouse made of pink or blue fancy flannel or yachting serge.

Fig. 19.

A white straw sailor hat is worn with this costume, with a ribbon band to match the colour of the band on the skirt. Twelve yards of single width, or six of double width material is required for the skirt and blouse, and three yards of single or one-and-a-half of double width material, with three-quarter yards of the cream for revers, cuffs, and pockets, is used for the jacket.

Flat patterns can be supplied: Fig. 17, 4½d.; Figs. 18 and 19, 6½d. each. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.